

FROM: Donna Landerman
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RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 422
AN ACT CONCERNING RESIDENTIAL WATER RATES, PUBLIC DRINKING WATER
SUPPLY EMERGENCIES AND SELLERS OF BOTTLED WATER

Public Hearing March 11, 2016

TO: Planning and Development Committee

As a Bloomfield resident, I have learned the hard way that our state public water is in jeopardy. We have both a water problem and democracy problem. SB 422 is a start at addressing the abuse of our public water through inadequate governmental oversight.

Water is a public trust resource. We citizens have for generations paid to have water companies like the MDC build and maintain holding and distribution facilities. The water is ours, not the MDC's. They may make arrangements to distribute it but they have gotten so out of control, with such limited oversight, that they believe it is their property to "sell" to anyone who asks. With out-of-date and inadequate state oversight, any town in our state could find their public water raided for profit by a "family business" like Niagara Bottling, a multinational, multimillion dollar corporation with a known history of predatory practices, that is still taking water out of drought plagued California. This is a serious statewide issue that needs immediate attention. Rarely do lawmakers have the opportunity to make such important legislation that can protect an enormous and essential public resource, and it does not require state funds to implement.

The important provisions of SB 422 need to include:

- **Protect residents, not water bottlers during a drought.** If the DPH declares a Drought Advisory, the production of bottled water for export out of state needs to stop.
- **Rescind water rate discounts for water bottlers.** They extract large amounts of our municipal water and spring water, fill the environment with plastic pollution, and profit while citizens are conserving and paying more.
- **Rescind the *Special Sewer Service Charge* discount for water bottlers (now known as the *Clean Water Project Charge*).** CT ratepayers have paid for years to build infrastructure for clean water; no discounts for corporations.
- **Re-establish a citizen MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) watch dog committee.**
- **Impose a moratorium on any large capacity agreements** until the State Water Plan is completed and addresses the issue of water bottling companies diverting water out of watersheds.

Thank you for your consideration of this extremely important issue. Water is only going to become an increasingly contested resource and we must protect our excellent water with smart legislation. This is for the health and safety of our future generations.

PS If you read this far, I want to thank you for serving as a state legislator. I realize it can be an incredible amount of work with not a lot of compensation. You are appreciated.